

# The TEA GOWN IS A WORK of ART

by Sara Marshall Cook



Tea gown of silk crepe and embroidered chiffon with a trimming of narrow fur



Chinese blue crepe is embroidered in contrasting shades of silk intermingled with gold and silver threads to form the panel and sleeves of a blue velvet negligee

—From Gidding

Tea gown of flame colored chiffon velvet faced with old blue crepe Elizabeth; trimmed with silver lace and white fur. A long-sleeved tea gown of embroidered silk

## Rich Colors of the Orient

**W**OMEN are adopting the handsome tea gown as a dinner dress for home wear. So very beautiful are these tea gowns that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish them not only from informal evening dresses but from formal ones as well.

There was a time, not far distant, when we considered a negligee as a delicate affair always in pale colorings which made it impractical to wear anywhere but in one's own room. Now most of the models, except those for very intimate wear, are in the rich dark colorings of the Orient, in gay, colorful tones of beautiful brocades and velvets such as those that are used in the most dignified gowns and evening wraps.

### Tea Gowns Made Into Evening Dresses

**M**ANY women buy these wonderful tea gowns, and with a few changes here and there convert them into evening dresses. They are not quite as expensive as the former and may be made a little more individual. This type of garment takes its inspiration from the dress of women in Eastern lands; most of them are from the costumes of Japan or those of Egypt. Our informal robes, which make no pretense of being dresses, are plainly of Japanese origin. They are selected for their usefulness, at the same time endeavoring to get as much of beauty as possible along with utility. The handsome ones, even of these plain robes, are very expensive, and the

best thing to do is make them yourself. Don't be afraid to practice on a really beautiful fabric; there is little chance of failing, because they are so very simple.

A pretty one which I saw was of a heavy pink silk. It was lined with thin white wash silk and there was an interlining of lightweight flannel. The garment was perfectly straight and quite ungirdled, the only trimming being a large rounding collar of fur.

### A Preference For Long-Draped Lines

**I**N THE more imposing negligees there appears to be a preference for long draped lines, the garment usually being cut in one piece with the lower portion of the skirt much narrower than at the hips. In many cases the draping swatches the ankles rather tightly. Even the sleeves, cut in kimono style, are gradually shaped so that they fit the arm

snugly below the elbow and are long; some of them coming almost to the tips of the fingers.

One new model which I have just seen has sleeves about four feet long. Such long sleeves seem very remarkable for any garment. You will wonder how the wearer got her arms through them. The sleeve was sewed up the full length just like any narrow sleeve, but it was slit at the elbow, allowing the arm to come through the seam. The rest of this queer long sleeve hung like a streamer. This tea gown was of black chiffon velvet and was quite untrimmed, but the long, straight draping was most effective.

Another model of the long draped type is of crushed velvet, dyed in coral and orange—a remarkably striking combination. The effect is obtained in this way: a water dye and an oil dye are put into one vessel. The fabric is then dipped into this; and as the water and oil will not mix the cloth comes out in

two tones. The sleeves, which are long and tight, wrinkling on the arm from the elbow to the wrist, are made in three sections connected by cording, which goes in rows about the arm. Weights start at the bottom of the sleeve continue all the way up it and down the side seams of the gown to hold the drapery of the sleeve in place.

### Elaborate Trimming Is Sometimes Used

**T**HE negligee is one article of dress in which we may allow ourselves much latitude in the matter of ornamentation, for while some of these handsome gowns have no trimming, others are very elaborately trimmed. One of velvet, made on exactly the same lines as the one just described, is lavishly covered with Chinese stencil work. Another is trimmed with large eyelets carrying out a design. These, instead of being worked with threads like the English eyelet embroidery,

are bound with different colored silks. Still another, of black chiffon velvet, has Batik work in gold. All of these robes slip on over the head.

In no dress can art be expressed in quite the same manner as in the tea gown, and women are continually demanding not only greater beauty of design, but of colorings in them. This has brought about some very interesting methods of hand dyeing to obtain unusual color effects. Both velvets and silks are dyed by dipping a portion of the material into the desired color and wringing it tightly with the hands. The next section of the cloth is then dipped into another shade and wrung in the same manner, and so on to the end of the piece. The fabric is then hung up so that the eyes run into each other, making wonderful shades that vie with the colors of the rainbow. The efforts of those who do this work are centered on obtaining uncommon colors. This they do through the study of lovely old pottery and other pieces of art, especially Persian and Indian things. Bronze shades are among the favorites, and some lovely velvets are done in this tone.

### Old Blue Velvet Makes A Stately Tea Gown

A stately type of tea gown, shown to-day, is of old blue velvet, combined with chiffon. It is very much embroidered; the chiffon being practically covered with a wonderful design of flowers, ducks and dragons. Many mellow colors of silk blend in this embroidery, although at first glance gold and silver appear to predominate. The

embroidery around the neck and sleeves is a cross-stitch of gold and silver threads. The method of putting this garment together is rather intricate, although the lines appear simple.

In contrast to these stately robes there is the pajama negligee emanating from the dress in which the women of China drink tea. China, however, furnishes only the basic idea for these dresses. When they emerge from the hands of our American designers they have acquired a frivolous appearance that is lacking in the Chinese coat and trousers.

The pajama negligee is made of bright colored velvets and silks, the trousers tying in about the ankles with ribbons of silver and gold. While the splendid tea gowns previously described are topped by a headpiece, these gay little Chinese costumes are accompanied by jaunty caps and slippers that match them. Many of the caps are small round affairs with dangling silver tassels.

### Deep Cuffs in the Form of Trousers

**A** NEGLIGEE just imported is of dull orange silk crepe embroidered with a very narrow tarnished gold braid. The lines of the robe are long and loose, the sleeves in this case being flowing and made in one with the rest of the dress. At the bottom, the gown is drawn in to deep cuffs in the form of trousers; these cuffs are weighted and trimmed with the tarnished braid.

Another gown which came from Paris at the same time has a slip made of tiers of accordion pleated flame colored chiffon. The top of the slip is finished in Empire style with bands of silver ribbon across the shoulders. From these shoulder straps is swung a long cloak of brocade velvet in the same bright tone. The cloak sweeps across the back in cavalier fashion leaving the frilly chiffon slip to form the front of the dress.



This black velvet gown trimmed with ermine is made over a slip of silver cloth



Three of the new head-dresses that are worn with tea gowns

—From Gidding